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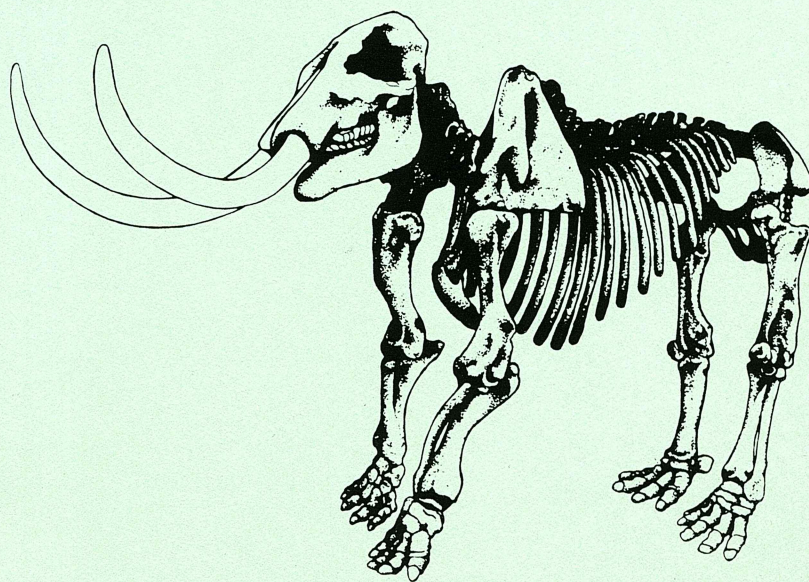
1988 Annual Report of the Missouri State Park Advisory Board



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FRONT COVER: *Missouri Mines State Historic Site (top) near Flat River was dedicated May 8, 1988. The museum at Mastodon State Park (bottom) near Imperial was dedicated June 26, 1988.*

1988 Annual Report of the Missouri State Park Advisory Board

James L. Wilson, *Chairman*
St. Louis

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John Ashcroft, *Governor*

G. Tracy Mehan III, *Director*
Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Wayne E. Gross, *Director*
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

JOHN ASHCROFT
Governor

G. TRACY MEHAN, III
Director



STATE OF MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Division of Energy
Division of Environmental Quality
Division of Geology and Land Survey
Division of Management Services
Division of Parks, Recreation,
and Historic Preservation

August 1, 1989

The Honorable John Ashcroft
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Governor Ashcroft:

I am pleased to transmit to you the 1988 Annual Report of the Missouri State Park Advisory Board. This report, prepared pursuant to Executive Order 86-26, summarizes the major accomplishments which occurred in the Missouri State Park System during the past year and recommends future actions which should be taken.

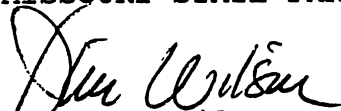
Because of the availability of the revenues from the Parks and Soils Sales Tax approved by the voters in 1984 and again in 1988, many significant improvements continued to occur throughout the park system. Campgrounds have been renovated, historic buildings restored, and exhibits have been constructed to interpret the unique natural and cultural resources preserved in our state park system.

Without question, the single biggest accomplishment during 1988 was the renewal of the Parks and Soils Sales Tax for another ten years. This was accomplished through the efforts of thousands of Missourians who gathered signatures and placed the issue before the voters during the 1988 general election. It was truly gratifying to see our citizens endorse this proposal by a two-to-one majority. Having a stable funding source for the next ten years will allow us to continue to plan for and operate a truly outstanding park system.

Your continued interest and support of this effort is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

MISSOURI STATE PARK ADVISORY BOARD


James L. Wilson
Chairman

Enclosure

cc: Members, Missouri General Assembly

MISSOURI STATE PARK ADVISORY BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Missouri state park system has a long and proud tradition of preserving the state's heritage. Since the 1920s, Missouri state parks have remained constant to their mission: to preserve and interpret the state's most outstanding natural and cultural resources and to provide recreational opportunities.

With the acquisition of its first park in 1924, Big Spring State Park near Van Buren, Missouri's mission to provide recreational opportunities was begun. During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program built a variety of park facilities--dining lodges, picnic shelters, cabins, and campgrounds--which still can be seen in the parks today.

The management of the state park system changed in 1936. State parks were separated from the state fish and game department and were placed under the supervision of a new Missouri State Park Board. This separation was done to clarify the operation of state parks from the management of Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife and to provide a new source of revenue.

A mill tax was established in 1945, earmarking a portion for state parks to ease the critical shortage of funds for the expanding park system. This special tax for state parks was in effect for 27 years and expired in 1972.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources was created in 1974 and assumed the responsibility for administering the state park system. The system was financed by general revenue appropriations and by federal funds such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

State parks faced economic hardship during the early 1980s. Missouri voters approved a \$600 million statewide bond issue in 1982 which included \$55 million for major renovation and construction projects in state parks. In 1984, Missouri voters, showed their support by approving a one-tenth-of-one-percent sales tax for state parks and soil and water conservation efforts. This tax became effective July 1, 1985.

1988 - A VERY SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Clearly the most significant event to occur during 1988 was the renewal of the parks and soils sales tax. In November, Missouri voters renewed the parks and soils sales tax by an overwhelming majority of two-to-one and extended the tax for ten more years.

A citizens group, Missouri Citizens for Soil, Water and State Parks, led the initiative petition drive to renew the tax. Over 207,000 signatures were collected (109,846 were required) to put the issue on the ballot for the November election.

The extension of the sales tax gives the department the opportunity to further improve the state park system and continue to provide the level of service the public has come to expect.

RECORD ATTENDANCE IN 1988

Attendance at Missouri state parks and historic sites during 1988 set an all-time record of 14.5 million visitors. The 1988 attendance reflected a 13-percent increase over 1987 and continued a pattern of steady growth since 1984.

A six-percent increase was realized in the number of motel room and cabins rented, as well as a three-percent increase in the number of camping permits sold. Use of the campground reservation system also increased from 2,974 sites reserved in 1987 to 3,841 sites reserved in 1988.

More than 28,700 people attended naturalist-led walks such as nature hikes and history walks while almost 50,000 attended special talks and programs. More than 111,000 stopped by the visitors centers and museums that tell the story of the parks while more than 190,000 walked trails with self-guiding information.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Another major event that occurred during 1988 was the acquisition of 1,660 acres of land adjoining Bennett Spring State Park in Dallas and Laclede counties. The additional land will provide visitors with areas for other types of recreational opportunities and helps protect the water quality of Bennett Spring. The addition will make backpacking and horseback-riding on specially designated trails available. These activities previously were not available due to park space limitations. Bennett Spring is the second most popular state park in terms of attendance and is nationally famous for its trout fishing.

In addition to the Bennett Spring acquisition, 595 acres were purchased in 14 separate transactions adjacent to other state parks. These purchases were critical in order to protect park resources and improve park management.

The Missouri state park system now encompasses 109,211 acres consisting of 45 state parks and 28 historic sites preserving the finest examples of the state's natural landscape and cultural heritage.

FUNDING FOR STATE PARKS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	1990		
	OPERATING	CI	TOTAL
GENERAL REVENUE	\$431,074	\$0	\$431,074
STATE PARK EARNINGS	\$1,316,006	\$1,300,000	\$2,616,006
STATE PARK SALES TAX	\$15,137,531	\$7,128,150	\$22,265,681
OTHER	\$783,842	\$1,072,600	\$1,856,442
TOTAL	\$17,668,453	\$9,500,750	\$27,169,203
	=====	=====	=====
SOURCE OF FUNDS	1989		
	OPERATING	CI	TOTAL
GENERAL REVENUE	\$4,196,196	\$0	\$4,196,196
STATE PARK EARNINGS	\$1,304,269	\$900,000	\$2,204,269
STATE PARK SALES TAX	\$9,755,853	\$13,464,200	\$23,220,053
OTHER	\$887,918	\$0	\$887,918
TOTAL	\$16,144,236	\$14,364,200	\$30,508,436
	=====	=====	=====
SOURCE OF FUNDS	1988		
	OPERATING	CI	TOTAL
GENERAL REVENUE	\$6,315,487	\$0	\$6,315,487
STATE PARK EARNINGS	\$1,298,189	\$700,000	\$1,998,189
STATE PARK SALES TAX	\$7,640,912	\$9,389,580	\$17,030,492
OTHER	\$745,721	\$0	\$745,721
TOTAL	\$16,000,309	\$10,089,580	\$26,089,889
	=====	=====	=====

MAJOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS COMPLETED

Major improvements projects initiated or completed during 1988 included construction of new visitor centers at:

- Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park, Chesterfield;
- Cuivre River State Park, Troy;
- Meramec State Park, Sullivan;
- Trail of Tears State Park, Jackson;
- Prairie State Park, Liberal; and
- Onondaga Cave State Park, Leasburg.

Other major improvements included the following:

- Stabilization of the castle at Ha Ha Tonka State Park, Camdenton, was begun;
- Initial development of the Robertsville State Park in Franklin County began with the construction of an entrance road, a boat launch, picnic sites, superintendent's residence, and a maintenance building;
- Missouri Mines State Historic Site, Flat River was opened to the public and dedicated in 1988. This site contains 16 structures remaining from the original 25-building Federal Mill complex once used by St. Joe Lead Company;
- Museum at the Mastodon State Park, near Imperial, was dedicated and provides an opportunity for the public to learn of the unique resources found in the park;
- Improvements to Weston Bend State Park in Platte County included the construction of a new campground, new picnic area, and additional park roads.
- The 80-site campground at Knob Noster State Park was totally renovated.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MISSOURI STATE PARKS

The increased attendance at Missouri state parks resulted in increased revenues generated by the park system. Total business generated by the sites throughout the state increased from \$7.6 million in 1987 to \$8.3 million in 1988. This figure included revenue from camping fees, historic sites tours, and concession-operated businesses such as dining lodges and cabins.

In addition to this revenue generated by park operations, a study was completed to determine the economic impact of the state park system.

According to figures from the Public Area Recreation Visitors Survey (PARVS), the total economic impact of the state park system was \$157 million in 1987. This figure includes direct expenditures by visitors to state parks both within the park facilities and the surrounding businesses.

A breakdown of this figure shows that the people who visited state parks in 1987 spent \$54 million. When this money is circulated in the economy, the economic impact is \$106 million, with \$31 million of the total contributed by overnight visitors and \$75 million from day-users. This \$106 million total represents money spent on lodging, food, transportation to and from the sites, activities, and for miscellaneous items such as souvenirs and clothing. Because these visitors spent this money, the total employment generated was 3,680 jobs.

In addition, the economic impact of the operation of the sites and people employed at the sites is \$51 million. This, added with the \$106 million, makes the total economic impact \$157 million.

DEER HUNTS

Pershing State Park near Laclede and Knob Noster State Park near Knob Noster were closed temporarily while hunts were conducted to alleviate deer overpopulation problems. The hunts were conducted not for recreation, but as a tool to help solve resource management problems. The study of how deer populations affect the parks will continue. The decision to conduct additional hunts will be made on a yearly basis after the research data is evaluated.

MISSOURI RIVER STATE TRAIL

Due to the unresolved lawsuit filed by adjacent landowners, little progress was made in 1988 toward the development and opening of this trail for public use.

Minimal funds were provided to the department to maintain the railroad corridor and no resources were provided for patrolling the property with law enforcement personnel.

Once the legal challenges have been resolved, the board encourages the legislature to appropriate funds to develop two pilot sections of the trail.

PARKS THREATS STUDY

A study to assess possible threats to state parks resources continued in 1988. Under review are concerns over air and water pollution, aesthetic degradation, archaeological theft, poaching, exotic-species encroachment, urbanization, loss of species diversity, and overuse of the parks and sites in general. The Missouri State Park Advisory Board will review the results of the study during 1989 and recommend possible solutions.

LONG RANGE PLANNING NEEDED

With the passage of the parks and soils sales tax, the need for a long range plan is evident. The Missouri State Park Advisory Board recommends that the Department of Natural Resources complete a plan in 1989 that addresses the operation of existing park units and the expansion of the system to include new areas.

